



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

## **Module 1 Part A**

### **A Brief Introduction to the Course**

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Developed by Chris Southcott, Department of Sociology, Lakehead University

Welcome to *Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2*. This course does not require a long introduction since it is very similar to *Contemporary Issues in the Contemporary World 1* and should be seen as the continuation of that course. The general structure of the course is the same. The learning objectives are the same, as are the means of assessment. Only the content is different. The first course dealt with population trends in the region, natural resource use and the economies of circumpolar communities, and economic ownership. In this course you will deal with governance and politics, social issues, education and knowledge systems, and global issues.

As was the case with *Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 1*, this course will provide an appreciation of the main challenges confronting the peoples and communities of the world's northern regions. It will be beneficial to those students attempting to better understand the current questions facing the north as well as to those planning to pursue advanced studies about the region.

This course has been designed for web-based delivery. It comprises thirteen modules, each with a "lecture" or module text, required and suggested readings, and study questions. Following is a brief introduction to the content of each of the modules in the order that they will be studied. Also, in brackets are the tentative dates that each module will be studied.

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## **Section One: Governance and Politics**

### **Module 1: Introduction and Democracy and Citizenship in the North (May 2 to 6)**

This module examines the issue of political equality in the North focusing on the issues of citizenship, democracy, and regionalism. It then examines three cases in the Circumpolar North and the issues different regions confront in addressing these questions.

### **Module 2: Indigenous Rights, Governance, and Self-Determination. (May 6 to 9)**

The module begins with a discussion of rights and considers the different types of arguments used to expand and limit Aboriginal rights, including both legal and moral rights. It then examines how these different Aboriginal



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rights are realized as polyethnic, special representation, and self-government rights in existing institutional arrangements.

### **Module 3: New Internal Political Structures (May 9 to 13)**

This module examines the growth of new political structures in the Circumpolar North, with an emphasis on the last two decades of the twentieth century and entry into the twenty-first. It begins with a definition of central terms and concepts, such as self-government and new politics. Then we take a tour to seven nation-states of the North, and describe some of the important political changes occurring at sub-national levels.

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## **Section Two: Education and Knowledge Systems**

### **Module 4: Traditional Knowledge (May 13 to 16)**

This particular module will help students explore traditional knowledge and understand what it is. As Indigenous peoples worldwide struggle for survival and political recognition, they are also working feverishly to avoid losing the wealth of knowledge and experience held by elders and traditional teachers in their communities. Issues to be discussed include indigenous lifestyles and modernity, the problems of preserving and protecting traditional skills, environmental issues and knowledge regimes, and the relationship between scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge.

### **Module 5: Education in the North (May 16 to 20)**

The aim of this module is to promote understanding of education and some of its current key issues in the Circumpolar World. After a short introduction, the key terms of the module will be introduced and explained with the context and the nature and role of the module in mind. The third part of the module discusses the educational and curricular policies particularly in the context of Finland. The fourth part deals with the solutions to the problem of long distances in the Far North, more particularly the use of boarding schools and information technology. The conclusions will be drawn in the fifth and final part of the module.

### **Module 6: Northern Post-Secondary Education (May 20 to 23)**

This module discusses the evolution, nature, and importance of post-secondary education in the Circumpolar North. It introduces the unique challenges and opportunities facing colleges and universities in the region.



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The first part is a description of the evolution of the post-secondary education after the Second World War. The second part discusses the general patterns in the post-secondary experience of Northern peoples. Following this, the module reviews of the development, activities and contributions of colleges and universities in the Circumpolar World. The final section describes the impact and possibilities of post-secondary education in the Circumpolar World.

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### Section Three: Social Issues

#### **Module 7: Women and Gender Relations in the North (May 23 to 27)**

The aim of this module is to promote awareness regarding women's life and some major current issues in the North Circumpolar World. We begin by taking an introductory glance at the Circumpolar World from the perspective of women. Then the key terms and concepts of the module will be introduced and explained keeping the context as well as the nature and role of the module in mind. The students are introduced to the terms and concepts in light of this particular module. The second part of the module consists of the key issues characterizing the life of women in the Circumpolar World. The third and final part presents some conclusions and final remarks.

#### **Module 8: Health and Health Care (May 27 to 30)**

This module provides an understanding of the core issues on the health status, health determinants, and health care of circumpolar populations, with an emphasis on Indigenous peoples. Because of their presence in four countries, the Eskimo/Inuit will be used as a case study. The key concepts, however, can be applied to other populations of more direct personal interest to individual students.

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### Section Four: Global Issues

#### **Module 9: Environmental Changes and Challenges in the Circumpolar World (May 30 to June 3)**

This module introduces the nature and extent of environmental change in the Circumpolar North. It highlights the historical and contemporary threats to the environmental integrity of the region. The first part discusses the vulnerability of the Northern eco-system and the relationship of Indigenous peoples with environmental sustainability. The second part outlines the history of the relationship between capitalism and Euro-American demand



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for Northern resources. Following this, the module notes the emergence of contemporary critiques of Northern resource developments and highlights contemporary issues and challenges.

### **Module 10: New External Political Structures (June 3 to 6)**

This module gives the basic information on the contemporary international system from the point of view of the North. First, it presents a theoretical framework in which two main contexts of international relations are described and lists briefly the different categories and the main international actors of the Circumpolar North; Second, it gives a brief overview of international co-operation and external political structures of the Cold War period and discusses the rapid change of the international system from the Cold War period into the transition period of the 1990s; Third, the module describes briefly the main external political structures. Fourth, it notes the importance of inter-regional co-operation in the Circumpolar North in general and especially in the European North.

### **Module 11: Security (June 6 to 10)**

This module introduces different concepts of security and gives an overview of military presence, especially that of the nuclear weapons systems in the Circumpolar North in the beginning of the twenty-first century. First, the module defines security, discusses the different concepts of security, and describes nuclear involvement. Second, it describes and explains both the current state of security and the military-political situation of the Circumpolar North and the change that has taken place since the early 1990s. Third, the module describes and recognizes the so-called “forces of continuity” and those of change from the point of view of the different concepts of security. Fourth, it describes the relationship between the military and the environment in the North and lists the elements of the nuclear problem via the Barents Sea region. Fifth, the module lists and describes the main challenges to security in the North.

### **Module 12: The Politics of Monoculture and Diversity in the North (June 10 to 13)**

This module promotes understanding of the global processes of monoculture and the importance of ethnocultural, gender, and ecological diversity from the northern perspective. The module elaborates on minority-majority relations. First, the module introduces the specific ethnocultural issues that create the tensions of monoculture and diversity in the North. It then takes a more thorough look at the key concepts that allow one to identify undemocratic processes based on asymmetrical power relations. The module concludes with a discussion about the value of biological, cultural and gendered diversity from the point of view of the subsistence perspective and of the gift economy.



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### **Module 13: Concluding Observations (June 13 to June 17)**

The concluding module will be a review of the main points of the course as they were first introduced in BCS 331. These points will be used to review the main points of the modules in BCS 332 in preparation for the final exam.

### **Final Exam: (June 17 to 20)**



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## **Module 1 Part B**

### **Democracy and Citizenship in the North**

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Developed by Greg Poelzer, Chair, Political Science Program, University of Northern British Columbia

#### **Key Terms and Concepts**

- democracy
- democratization
- citizenship
- regionalism
- internal colonialism
- centre-periphery
- robust community

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#### **Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to:

1. Define and explain the concept of citizenship
2. Define the concept of regionalism and apply it to Northern regions
3. Link the concepts of citizenship, democracy, and regionalism as they relate to questions of political equality
4. Identify several cases in the Circumpolar North where citizenship and regionalism are important issues

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#### **Module Readings**

Read the Overview and Lecture for Module 1 Part B, then read the assigned readings from the *Reading File* given below.

Reading 1: The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, “Report no. 34 to the Storting Regarding Rural and Regional Policy”

Reading 2: Daniel R. Kempton, “The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia): The Evolution of Centre-Periphery Relations in the Russian Federation”



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Reading 3: Geoffrey R. Weller, “Should British Columbia Create a Ministry of Northern Affairs?”

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### Overview

Do residents of northern regions enjoy political equality with their fellow citizens in the South? This module examines the issue of political equality in the North focusing on the issues of citizenship, democracy, and regionalism. It then examines three cases in the Circumpolar North and the issues different regions confront in addressing these questions.

### Lecture

#### Introduction

We begin our discussion of citizenship and political equality in northern regions by examining three interrelated concepts: citizenship, democracy, and regionalism. Drawing on the work of Thomas H. Marshall (1965), the module first defines citizenship and three basic types of citizenship rights: civil, political, and social. It then turns to a discussion of democracy and democratization. With the exception of Russia, all countries of the Circumpolar North are long-established, liberal democracies. Accordingly, we consider what democratization means for citizenship rights in the post-Soviet era. The building block in this module is the concept of regionalism.

#### Citizenship

Citizenship means membership in a political community that carries both rights and obligations. Citizenship in modern democratic states has particular importance for notions of political equality and inequality. All political communities have means to determine who belongs and who does not; and, all political communities have determined, at a minimum, what the obligations and duties of membership in the political community are. The idea of citizenship, as a form of membership in a political community, has roots that go back to ancient Rome and Greece. For the ancients, citizenship did have both rights and duties; however, citizenship was restricted to a small minority of the population, which excluded both women and slaves. For most of the period prior to the French Revolution of 1789, the vast majority of Europeans remained subjects of dynastic realms. The French Revolution was an enormous watershed in human history because it ushered in the era of modern citizenship. The slogan of the French Revolution, “liberté, égalité, fraternité,” tied three notions of liberty, equality, and fraternity to the notion of democratic citizenship. The idea that all men (and eventually women) should stand as equals before the law and the state was revolutionary. Today, a common way to assess the political equality in democratic polities is through the lens of citizenship. This includes political equality in northern regions.



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## Types of Citizenship Rights

What kind of rights do citizens in democratic states possess? In his seminal work, *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development*, Marshall (1965) outlines three main citizenship rights: civil rights, political rights, and social rights. Historically, Marshall argues that modern citizenship began with the expansion of civil rights, including equality before the law, the right to free speech, the right to association, and so forth. Political rights—the right to vote and the right to run for political office—followed. Universal suffrage—the extension of political rights to all adults; men and women, regardless of whether they owned property or not—was achieved only in the early twentieth century. Social rights—the rights to education, social welfare, unemployment insurance, and equality of economic opportunity—were achieved in their fullest form following the Second World War. Most democracies today remain firmly committed to civil and political rights; however, the exact nature of social rights, and the extent to which they ought to be applied, has become central to political debate.

## Democracy and Democratization

Before we proceed further in our examination of political equality in the North, we need to define two key terms: democracy and democratization. Mainwaring (reference?) observes that a democracy must meet, at a minimum, three basic criteria: (1) competitive elections are *the* route to forming governments, and elections must offer the possibility of alternation in political power; (2) there must be near universal citizenship (although democracies have excluded some participation, including participation by criminals, such exclusions must be minimalized); and (3) although the principle of majority rule prevails, it cannot do so at the expense of minority rights and civil liberties (if these are not protected, competitive elections with broad political participation are not possible). For the most part, established democracies approach these ideals. However, where Western democracies move away from these ideals and practice is less than perfect, particularly in the protection of civil and minority rights, political equality comes into question.

## Regionalism and Political Equality

### Regionalism and Identity

Regionalism poses a continuing challenge to political equality and democratic citizenship. Whether or not citizens of a region feel that they have appropriate levels of representation, that their political participation can have meaningful influence in the outcomes of political decision-making, and that they get their “fair share” of the available social and economic opportunities can impinge on the legitimacy of the political institutions of a state. David Bell, a scholar on regionalism and political culture writes that:



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Multiple, reinforcing cleavages do not invariably produce conflict. Cleavages are necessary for conflict to occur, but conflict also requires an awareness of the cleavages and a sense that regional inequalities are unjust. Like other “isms,” regionalism is cultural, based on a sense of deprivation relative to others. One cannot discuss the political side of regionalism without attending to the beliefs, values, and attitudes prevailing in a region. Only when this cultural factor, this regional awareness, is present—at least among the elite—does a region take on political, and not merely economic or geographical, significance. (Bell and Tepperman 1992:142)

In other words, people can have a distinctive cultural identity without that identity leading to political action. What is required for political action is that individuals believe that they are not being treated equally by the other, usually dominant, cultures. Some observers suggest that a northern regionalism exists within the countries of the Circumpolar North where national or provincial governments make decisions that affect the well-being of Northerners without adequate attention to the cultural values and needs of Northerners and without adequate opportunity for Northerners to have input into those decisions.

## Internal Colonialism

Often, at the core of regionalism is the sense, real or perceived, that a larger political community treats one of its regions as an internal colony. Internal colonialism can be cultural, economic, or political. In this regard, Michael Hechter’s seminal work, *Internal Colonialism* (1975), remains an important source of insights with which to build a framework for analysis of North-South relations within the Circumpolar North. In his study of the Celtic peripheries of Britain, Hechter challenges structural and cultural diffusion theories that suggest that peripheral regions inevitably assimilate into the institutions and values of the dominant society. He finds that, instead of assimilation, regional ethnic mobilization (political action) occurs on the peripheries. Hechter argues that internal colonialism, and with it a cultural division of labour, explains this rise of ethnic mobilization. Moreover, he suggests that internal colonialism has parallels with European colonialism in Africa and Asia in the nineteenth century.

Without detailing his whole argument, or accepting wholesale the application of his framework to the study of the Circumpolar World, a number of key elements of his description of internal colonialism may have applicability.

1. Commerce and trade among members of the periphery tend to be monopolized by members of the core.
2. Historically, the peripheral economy is forced into complementary development to the core, and thus becomes dependent on external markets.



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3. Generally, this economy rests on a single primary export.
4. Typically there is a great migration and mobility of peripheral workers in response to price fluctuations of exported primary products.
5. There is a relative lack of services, lower standard of living and higher level of frustration among members of the peripheral group. (Hechter 1975: 33)

The politics of internal colonialism pose a challenge for political integration. But, as Hechter argues, this challenge “relates not to a failure of peripheral integration with the core, but to a malintegration established on terms increasingly regarded as unjust and illegitimate” (1975: 34). The solution to this challenge, he argues, is “best served by strengthening the political power of the peripheral group so that it may change the distribution of resources to its greater advantage” (1975: 34). One solution is the building from below of political, social, and economic institutions that address better the needs and aspirations of peripheral regions. Another solution is the devolution of power from core to regions. Both of these processes may lead to greater political equality between Northern regions and Southern core areas.

Whether perceived or real, a number of these features of internal colonialism girder regionalism in the North. Again, as David Bell argues,

Regional alienation is not founded on economic disparity alone, but on disparity seen through a cultural lens that lines up the facts in a particular way. . . . Two considerations are key: the extent of regional identification, the perception of regional injustice. Not surprisingly, the question of identification revolves around provincial rather than regional loyalties, and is typically phrased with explicit reference to *government*. (Bell and Tepperman 1992:144–145)

## Northern Identity and Aspirations

One scholar who has devoted much inquiry to the place of the North is Ken Coates. For Coates, the question of Northern identity is pivotal. In his article, “Discovery of the North” (1995), Coates identifies no less than nine different definitions of the North:

1. outsiders’ definitions
2. geographical constructs
3. spatial constructs
4. social-cultural definitions
5. economic determinism



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6. climatic considerations
7. political structures
8. evolutionary concepts
9. North as a state of mind.

Social-cultural definitions of the North, for instance, address one common reality of Northern societies, the relations between Indigenous peoples and non-indigenous settlement, though these relations are hardly unique to Northern areas. Economic determinism focuses on the resource-based economies of many Northern regions, but this reality is changing for some Northern areas. However, it is in his last definitions of the North—North as a state of mind—that may be the most interesting and useful.

Northerners' sense of themselves and their region—has attracted little scholarly work. Ironically, this may well be the most important area of analysis, for as with any concept of region or of belonging to an identifiable group or area, self-definition is a vitally important characteristic. Whatever definition of the North is finally settled upon must, therefore, include a strong consideration of how the region views itself. (1995: 22)

Residents in the Circumpolar North see themselves as Northerners living in regions that are considered, by the South, to be on the periphery or to be the hinterland. Culturally, Northerners maintain ways of life distinct from Southerners. This distinction is manifest in recreational pursuits and in active community life, and more sharply over issues such as hunting. Socially, the availability of services (health care, transportation, and so on) is usually poorer than in the South and represents a major source of grievance for Northerners. Economically, there is a greater dependency on limited primary resource industries than in the South, whether it is mining, forestry, or fisheries, and related to this dependency is the migration of workers and populations as markets rise and fall. Because the North often contributes greatly to the larger economies, there is a real sense among Northerners that they do not have as much political influence within the dominant society that they ought to have. The North, however, is in transition, and many Northerners, the elite and citizens, are making demands on national governments and creating institutions from below that are empowering the North.

## **Northern Citizenship and Political Equality**

Following are three brief case studies that outline some of the challenges that Northern citizens face in their quest for political equality. These cases include the provincial Norths of Canada, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), and Northern Norway.



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### The Canadian Provincial Norths

Many students of Northern studies are familiar with the Canadian territorial North; few are as equally knowledgeable about the provincial North. In contrast to the residents of the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, the residents of the vast expanse of the sub-Arctic boreal regions of the provincial Norths of Canada do not have their own territorially-based governments. Although they may have municipal governments, they do not have county or district level governments with significant legislative or administrative power to represent their interests. This is a critical distinction between the territorial and provincial Norths in Canada. Moreover, the provincial Norths, though they frequently represent far less than ten per cent of the population, often produce a disproportionate share of provincial government revenues derived from resource rents. This disjuncture between political economy and political representation is the basis for perceived political inequality and Northern grievances. As Coates and Morrison observe, “The Northern regions of the provinces have been rendered into internal colonies, their resources deemed to be available primarily for non-Natives in the South, and with comparatively little thought to the long-term prospects of northern society” (Coates and Morrison 1992: 6).

Although there are no clear figures that show what percentage of provincial GDPs are generated in the Provincial Norths, the following figures are revealing. In Ontario, forestry remains a large industry, although forest reserves are almost exclusively located in the North. Domestically, the forest products industry provides some 90,000 jobs in Northern and Southern Ontario and more than 40 communities, primarily in the North, are dependent on the forest products industry. (Ontario) Externally, the forest industry is also important. According to the Ontario government, in

1996, the forest products industry shipped approximately \$12.2 billion worth of forest products. Wood products industries accounted for \$3.4 billion while paper and allied industries amounted to \$8.8 billion. In addition, the sale of forest products abroad is important to the province’s balance of trade. In 1996, the value of forest products exports, primarily to the United States, is estimated to be \$7.3 billion.” (Ontario)

In British Columbia, forestry is also an important source of revenue for the provincial coffers, accounting for \$1,392,100,000 of government revenue in 1999–2000. Forestry, however, is a province-wide industry and it is difficult to estimate the North’s share of that contribution. If we compare the contribution of oil and gas to the province of British Columbia in the same period, a resource found almost exclusively in the northeast of the province, we find that oil and gas contributed \$669,700,000 to government revenues—almost half of that contributed by forestry (British Columbia 2000). Further, if we examine per capita income and government flows, we find that the average net provincial taxes paid (taxes paid minus transfer payments received, for example, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, family allowances and child tax credits) in 1996 was \$581.



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However, taxes paid in the northern districts of British Columbia were more than double: \$1,286 in the Cariboo, \$1,053 in the North Coast, \$1,118 in the Nechako, and \$1,557 in the Northeast (Statistics Canada 1999).

Northerners are aware of the wealth historically generated in the North. If the sentiment, “no taxation without representation” were applied across the provinces, one begins to get a sense for part of the North’s alienation. At an all-candidates meeting in Northern Alberta during a recent provincial election, for example, it was noted that a “lack of government spending compared to billions the same governments collects from resources like oil and gas taken from the region, emerged as a theme of the two-hour meeting.” The theme of the contributions of the Provincial Norths also emerged during a recent federal election. In an article titled “Alliance would harm North, Bonin says,” in the *Sudbury Star*, October 30, 2000, Denis St. Pierre reported that Northern Ontario Member of Parliament Ray Bonin argued that programs such as FedNor, which provide funding for Northern economic development, were justified stating, ““This country was built on the backs of people from Northern Ontario and northern provinces””.

Northerners understand the importance of having a voice where decisions are made that affect their economic futures. In an article titled “Calahasen receives portfolio promotion,” in the *Lakeside Leader*, March 21, 2001, Tina Kennedy reported on the ministerial appointment of northern Alberta Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Pearl Calahasen, to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. In the article, Gerry Allaire, mayor of Slave Lake, stated, ““with Mike Cardinal (another northern MLA) as Minister of Resource Development, a lot of the development in the North is going to be controlled by northerners, that’s a positive development’.” In a similar vein, Maynard Sonntag, MLA for Meadow Lake Saskatchewan, commented, in an article by Andrea Mair titled “Sonntag handed additional portfolio,” in the *Meadow Lake Progress*, March 11, 2001, on receiving the job of Minister Responsible for the Crown Investments Corporation, in addition to his portfolio of Energy and Mines. Sonntag said, ““I think it bodes well for the area to have someone from a northern, rural community to have two major portfolios’.” Political representation, however, does not exist only in provincial cabinets. Initiatives at the local level are also viewed as essential. One of these initiatives is the creation of the Northern Forest Diversification Centre to be located at Keewatin Community College in The Pas, Manitoba. Noting the important role of the centre in facilitating economic development in Northern Manitoba, an editorial in the *Thompson Citizen*, March 5, 2001, stated, “Decisions made by the senior levels of government often do not recognize the needs of northern communities. Now, northerners are demanding a greater role in development. By forming strategic alliances they can do just that.” How much influence any single cabinet minister has or how effective any committee or initiative is are debatable matters; however, Northerners expect representation. They no longer accept the status of internal colonies.



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**The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russia**

Political representation and control over the economic future of Northern regions is further complicated by the process of democratization. The example of the Republic of Sakha in northeastern Russia illustrates this point well. The one million people of the Republic of Sakha, located six time zones east of Moscow, represent less than one per cent of the population of the Russian Federation. However, the Republic of Sakha makes up one-fifth the territory of the Russian Federation and accounts for almost all of its diamond deposits and many major gold and other precious metals deposits. During the Soviet period, the Republic of Sakha (then called the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic), was viewed as a storehouse of mineral wealth for the Soviet Union, with local people having little or no say over regional development. Policy decisions flowed from Moscow. In the 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, with his policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), brought new opportunities to change the political dynamics between regions and the political centre. Many of the Northern regions, including Sakha, were at the centre of this dynamic.

Northern regions (along with other regions) in Russia began to assert greater autonomy from Moscow beginning in the 1990s. In the contest in power between then President of the Russian Federation (then called the Russian Soviet Federation Socialist Republic), Boris Yel'tsin and President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, Yel'tsin, encouraged regional elites to "take as much sovereignty as you can swallow," according to "Moscow Prepares for Struggles Against Regions," an article in the *Moscow News*, January 27–February 2, 1995, by Azer Mursaliyev. The regions did. In the early 1990s, a number of regions began to declare themselves sovereign in what was known as the "parade of sovereignties." In September 1990, the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic declared sovereignty and re-named itself the Yakut-Sakha Republic, reflecting the name the largest indigenous ethnic group of that part of Siberia, the Sakha. (At that time, Russians and other newcomer nationalities constituted just over 50% of the population; the Sakha were just under 40%; and Aboriginal peoples about 5%.) Underscoring its claim to internal sovereignty within the Russian Federation, the Yakut-Sakha Republic enacted its own constitution in April 1992, replacing the Soviet constitution of 1978, and changed its name to the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), as it has been known ever since. To the frustration of Moscow, the constitution of the Republic of Sakha stated that its laws took precedence over the laws of the Russian Federation. These political and symbolic attempts to redefine the Republic of Sakha within the Russia Federation were attempts to break away from the pattern of internal colonialism that many Northern regions experience.

Attempts to change the pattern of internal colonialism in the Republic of Sakha were not limited to political and symbolic steps. The Republic of Sakha also attempted to change the political economy between this Northern resource store house and Moscow. For years, newcomer workers from



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European Russian, Ukraine, and other regions of the Soviet Union migrated to the Republic of Sakha to work in the resource sectors. They received high salaries, good apartments, and vehicles. This was in sharp contrast to long time residents whether they be Sakha, Native, or Russian Siberians who often had much lower salaries, poor housing, and had to wait for many years in the official cue for a vehicle. Often apartments were left vacant as migrant workers returned home to the European part of the Soviet Union, while Northern residents remained in poorer housing. During the Soviet period, five million workers and their families came and left the republic often working for only a handful of years. Resources were produced in the North, but Northerners benefited little. After the declaration of sovereignty, the Republic of Sakha attempted to ensure that more money and resources remained in the republic. As early as 1992, for instance, the republican government negotiated an agreement with Moscow whereby the Republic of Sakha was able to dispose of 11.5 per cent of its gold and 20 per cent of its diamonds. (Bond, Levine, and Austin 1992). With these new found resources, the Republic of Sakha has invested heavily in expanding post-secondary education through such institutions as the Yakutsk State University, which now boasts several new buildings equipped with state-of-the-art computer labs, as well as new faculties, such as international economics and business. The republic has also invested in public infrastructure such as a new indoor arena and athletic stadium. These types of initiatives help create conditions and opportunities to better the lives of Northerners by changing the political economy of resource development that was once entirely dominated by Moscow.

## Northern Norway

Northern Norway offers a final example of the attempts to address the question of political equality in the Circumpolar North. Although by North American and Russian standards there is greater social and political equality between North and South in Fennoscandia, social and political inequality does exist and is recognized. As a recent Norwegian government report notes,

The most peripheral areas of the country emerge worst regarding education, income and wealth, but best in the areas of housing situation, pollution, services and social infrastructure. . . . In the annual standard of living study carried out by the Central Bureau of Statistics nine of the ten municipalities that come out worst are in North Norway. (The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development 2000)

Recognizing these disparities, Norway, as is the case of the other countries of Fennoscandia, has attempted to reduce these inequalities in its regional development strategies.

Central Norway's Northern and regional development strategy is the development of *robust communities*. According to the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, robust



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communities have the following characteristics: equal and stable welfare provision; a competitive, profitable and flexible business sector; good access to skills; and varied employment market, housing, and service provision (Royal Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development 2000). It is important to note that the Norwegian government sees the development of robust communities as part of its general policies over the past fifty years to achieve an equal standard of living throughout the country. Accordingly, this policy places greater effort on the development of robust regions and communities than at developing individual places and individual enterprises. This approach contrasts sharply with the efforts commonly found in Alaska and northern Canada, where emphasis is often placed on individual enterprises. This latter approach leads to an emphasis on job creation strategies, focused on the development of particular, individual economic enterprises, such as diamond mines or off-shore drilling, rather than on a holistic approach aimed at developing a Northern region and the communities that make it up.

How does this policy operate in practice? Rob van Adrichem (2001) notes that in Norway three levels of government work together to realize policy goals—the national government through the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development; the regional governments called counties; and, finally, the individual municipalities. The Ministry has four main tasks: First, it develops a broadly defined plan for sustainable development every four years. Second, it coordinates with other national ministries that have a bearing on regional development. Third, it coordinates the funding of regional development, since counties do not have the capacity for direct taxation. Fourth, it reviews county development plans which are then adopted by Royal Resolution (van Adrichem 2001). The county council plays a pivotal role in the planning process; the county council is responsible for coordinating the participation of major actors in the planning process. In Troms County, for example, these actors include business organizations, labour, the Saami Parliament and, of course, municipalities. One example of the results of this planning process is the linkage between education and the development of robust communities. Let's take one example. If service provision in the North, such as health care, is to be comparable with that of the South, then there needs to be a high number of doctors. In Troms County, the University of Tromsø and its medical school is a product of such planning. Whereas only thirty to forty per cent of students from the South stay in the North after graduation from medical school, over eighty per cent of students in the North remain in the North (van Adrichem 2001). These kinds of initiatives are essential to the creation of robust communities. Robust communities are essential if political inequalities between North and South are to be reduced.

## Conclusion

Northern residents continue to face questions of political equality within their larger national political communities. Past patterns of internal colonialism left a legacy of political inequality in many Northern regions.



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Resource development in the North saw huge flows of wealth into the governments and economies of the South. Northern residents, historically, had little to no say in the patterns of resource development or over how the wealth created from this development would be distributed. These patterns are now changing as is evident in the three examples explored in this module.

### Study Questions

1. What do we mean by citizenship?
2. What are the relationships among regionalism, identity, equality, and democracy?
3. In addition to the examples in the lecture, give examples of political inequality between North and South? What is the basis for this inequality?
4. In addition to the examples in the lecture, give examples of policies that aim to reduce political inequalities between North and South?
5. Is it better to focus on individuals or on regions to reduce political and social inequalities? Or, does it depend on the particular region in the Circumpolar North? Support your answer.

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## Supplementary Readings

Ken Coates, The Rediscovery of the North: Towards a Conceptual Framework for the Study of Northern/Remote Regions. *The Northern Review* 12–13 (Summer 1994/Winter 1995): 15–43. A full text version of this article is available at <http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/review/coates12.htm>



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